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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY; RUSSIA;
US-ARGENTINE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP; 06/07/07

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Major international opinion pieces discuss Brazil's "realistic" foreign policy; Russia's authoritarian style of government; and prospects for the US-Argentine bilateral relationship.

12. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Venezuela is involved in Brazil's strategic game"

Leading "Clarín" carries an op-ed piece by Fabian Calle, professor of International Relations, Universidad Di Tella-UCA, who writes (06/07) "According to realistic international principles, the countries having the largest capabilities and/or playing an important role in the strategic agendas of major powers have greater margins to maneuver to enforce double standards in their foreign policies while taking actions and issuing statements that could impose high costs on other countries."

"This long standing warning becomes a useful tool in analyzing the relationship between the Argentine and Brazilian governments and Venezuela's Bolivarian government and also in observing the latest disputes between Caracas and Brasilia.

"... The current conventional knowledge about an idyllic relationship between Brazil and the US, which includes alleged irreversible tension between Lula and Chavez, is far from reflecting the complexities of the reality.

"... Perhaps a positive step in bridging the gap between facts and perceptions is the recent article by Mark Falcoff, renowned expert from the G.O.P., warning about how mistaken it is to view Argentina as a country substantially influenced by Chavez.

"Just as mistaken as this, would be not to notice Brazil's interesting strategic game which consists of using Venezuela to put a brake on the US, while taking advantage of its ties to the superpower to keep Chavez and his petro-dollars at bay."

- "Russia and human rights"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" editorializes (06/07) "The Russian Federation's ties to the Western countries is going through a difficult time, so much so that the country's internal situation is perhaps the weakest since Cold War times.

"On the one hand, there is the tension triggered by the unresolved issue of the gas supply to the EU. On the other hand, we find serious problems in bilateral ties to nations once behind the Iron Curtain, such as Poland, Georgia, Estonia and Lithuania. To this, one should add the threats to and spats with the US due to the

deployment of an antimissile shield in Europe, this being a consequence of the concern sparked by Iran's military power and its disturbing nuclear program...

"But, probably, what most concerns the international community is the Russian Government's authoritarianism, - the persecution of and restrictions imposed on political opponents, the pressure on journalists and their lack of safety, the direct or indirect control of mass media, and the subsequent restriction on freedom of expression, and recently the harassment of NGOs devoted to protecting human rights and civil and political freedoms.

"... Nothing of all this should be silenced. Otherwise, things will continue as they are now, which increasingly distances the Russian Federation from the essential foundations of democracy."

- "Neither a carnal nor a conflictive relationship"

Luis Rosales, political consultant and head of FURP (Fundacion Universitaria del Rio de la Plata), opines (06/07) "... In political and strategic terms, the US-Argentine relationship, while cordial and respectful, has never been optimal.

"... The decade of a 'carnal' relationship with the US proved that this road did not lead to major results other than Argentina's designation as a major, non-NATO ally and an increase in the meat quota sold - an disproportionate concession in exchange for a small benefit, which vanished when the conservative Bush administration removed its support during the agonizing conclusion of the convertibility system.

"The other extreme, a tense and distant relationship, does not seem a smart option either. Only countries like Venezuela, which is submerged in a sea of oil, can disregard the White House without fearing the consequences of retaliation.

"The road to be followed is that of the most advanced democracies in the world - a relationship of mutual respect and convenience. Every issue is independently treated without any automatic alignment. For example, the global war on terrorism unites all civilized democracies while the ways to handle this issue can vary..."

"The challenge is making an agenda that serves both sides and that includes issues that will let Argentina negotiate with a little more power in defending its interests... Now that there will be a political change in the two countries, there is an interesting opportunity to reshape the bilateral relationship. If two women end up ruling the countries..., perhaps gender solidarity will contribute to understanding. However, even if the presidents continue being men, they will have to seek a middle ground between the useless promiscuity of a 'carnal' relationship and the also useless tension of constant clashes."

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